MARVEL

013

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DEERING
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STAR WARS™

# DOCTOR APHRA

# THE ENORMOUS PROFIT

## Part V

*It is a time of instability for the Galactic Empire as rebel forces fight for freedom. But on the edges of the galaxy, the criminal underworld continues unabated in its pursuit of profits.*

*Doctor Aphra, rogue archaeologist and scoundrel, is trying to survive after her most recent scheme has gone awry. Her plan to auction off an ancient Jedi consciousness trapped in an artifact had seemed like a sure thing. It was not to be.*

*Rur, the ancient Jedi awakened in a droid body, now stalks the halls of a space station seeking violent revenge on those who sought to own him. Unfortunately, the only person powerful enough to stop him is the one even more inclined to kill Aphra on sight – the Imperial Lord, Darth Vader....*


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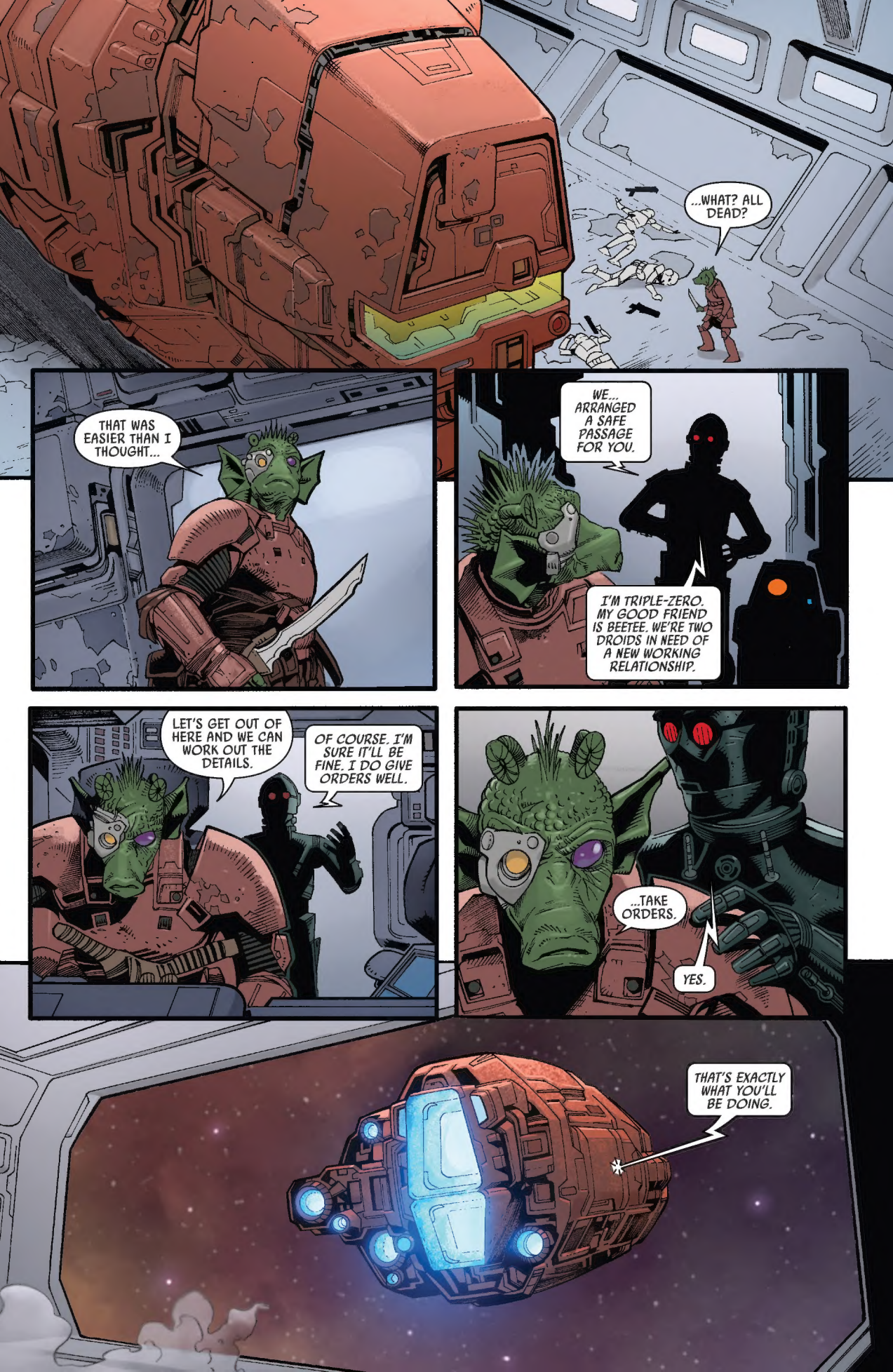
YOU ARE NOT SITH. I WOULD KNOW IT.
I AM THE LAST OF THE ORDU ASPECTU! I AM JEDI!
NOTHING STIRS INSIDE YOU.
ALL I SENSE IS ABOMINATION.
ONE OF US IS MISTAKEN.

LET US SEEK TRUTH TOGETHER.
I THOUGHT I'D LEFT THIS STAGE OF MY LIFE WAY BEHIND.

OH, HELL.
TIME TO MOVE...
YEAH, GREAT PARTY, APHRA. THANKS FOR THE INVITE.
HEY, WE'RE ALIVE.
LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY.
HEY, BUDDY...

...GET WALKING.
OKAY. HUMAN SHIELD. CRUEL, BUT A CLASSIC.
NOW, WHO TO...
AH-HA!
HEY, SUTHA!

GET CRAWLING.
<YOU WILL SUFFER FOR THIS.>*
HEY, WE BOTH NEEDED TO RUN AT SOME POINT.
CONSIDER ME YOUR GREAT MOTIVATOR.
*TRANSLATED FROM HUTTESE.
WOW. WE MADE IT. IT'S A MIRACLE.
<WHEN THE GREAT JABBA DISCOVERS WHAT HAPPENED HERE, HE WILL HAVE YOU PAY.>
YEAH, IF HE DISCOVERS. SO I REALLY SHOULD KI--
WOW. LUCKY DEFLECTION.
WELL... I MEAN, LUCKY FOR ME.
MORAL DILEMMA AVERTED!
"FIGHT YOUR WAY ABOARD. SLIP THE BLOCKADE. NEVER LOOK BACK.
"YOU CAN DO THIS, YONAK..."


...WHAT? ALL DEAD?
THAT WAS EASIER THAN I THOUGHT...
WE... ARRANGED A SAFE PASSAGE FOR YOU.
I'M TRIPLE-ZERO. MY GOOD FRIEND IS BEETEE. WE'RE TWO DROIDS IN NEED OF A NEW WORKING RELATIONSHIP.
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE AND WE CAN WORK OUT THE DETAILS.
OF COURSE. I'M SURE IT'LL BE FINE. I DO GIVE ORDERS WELL.
...TAKE ORDERS.
YES.
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU'LL BE DOING.

NO!

HAHAHAHAHAHA.
THE BODY TRAPPED MY CONSCIOUSNESS, LIMITED ME.
NOW I AM ETERNAL RUR, BOUNDLESS, GOD OF MACHINES.
I CONTROL THE GUNS, THE ROBOTS...
...EVEN YOU, FAKE SITH!
FEEL MY MAJESTY FLOW THROUGH YOUR CIRCUITRY!
HA HAHAHA HAHA!

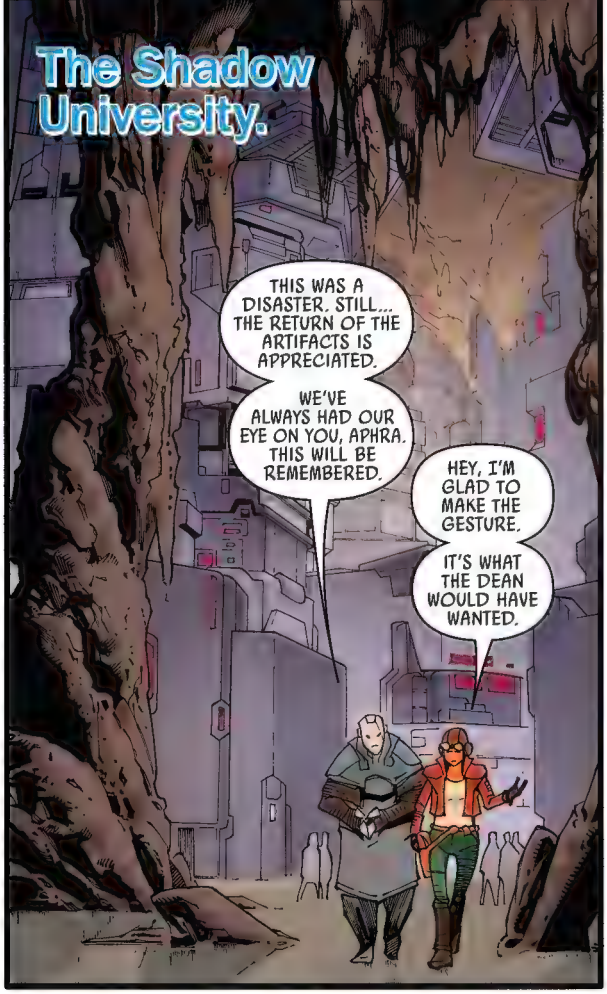
OKAY. A FEW GUARDS. I CAN HANDLE A FEW...
HUH.
C'MON, VADER--FINISH RUR!
YOU'RE BETTER THAN HE IS.

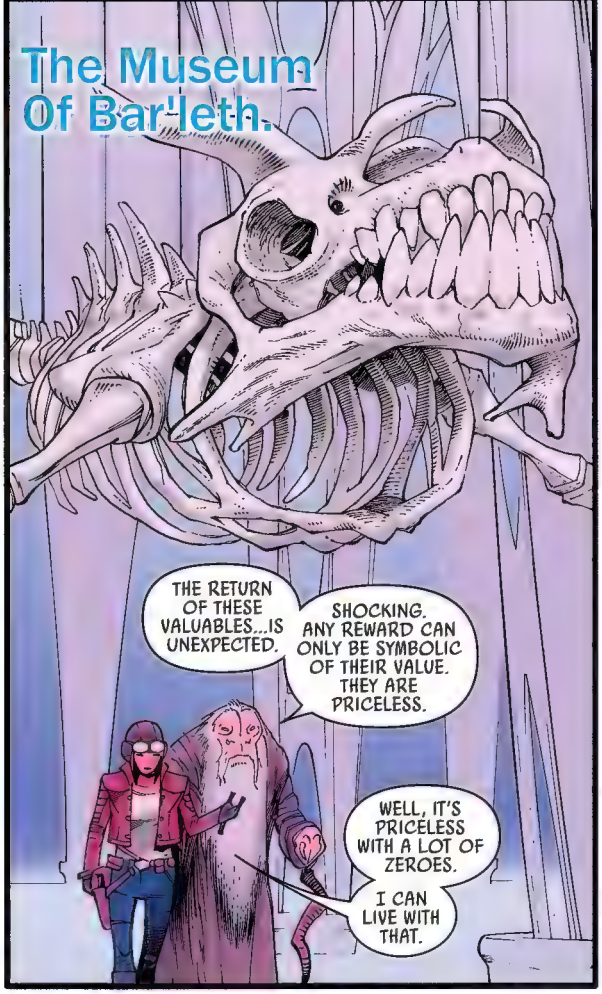
YOU ARE NOT THE FIRST TO ATTEMPT SUCH A FEAT.
SAFEGUARDS WERE IMPROVED.
NOOOOOOO--
YOUR TRICKERY IS INCONSEQUENTIAL COMPARED TO THE OVERWHELMING POWER OF THE FORCE.

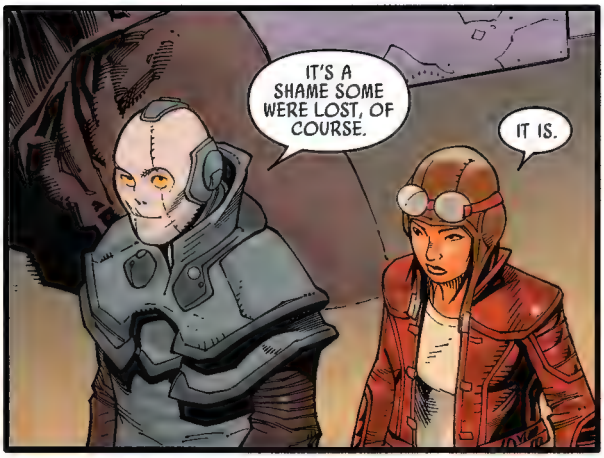
ALL OVER?
I BELIEVE IN YOU, DARTH VADER.
SHIP? CHECK. PRICELESS ARTIFACTS? CHECK.

LORD VADER, SOME SMALL SHIPS ARE SLIPPING THE BLOCKADE.
THE STAR DESTROYER CAN PURSUE, BUT WE'D LOSE ANYONE ELSE WHO RUNS...
HMM. I FEEL A PRESENCE I HAVE NOT FELT FOR SOME TIME...
AAAAAAAAHH!
AN... INFURIATING PRESENCE.

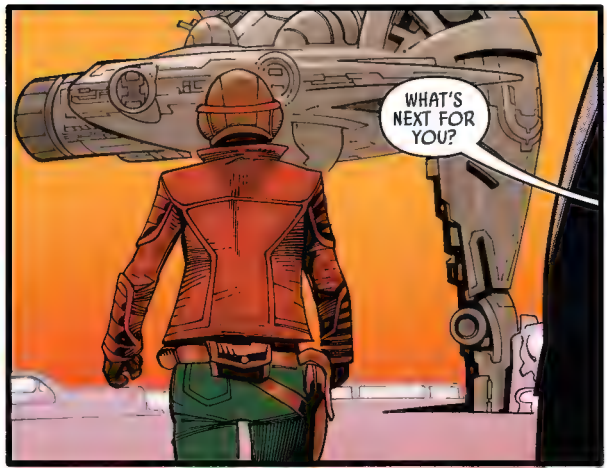
IT IS OF NO MATTER. MAINTAIN THE BLOCKADE.
WE CAN AFFORD TO LOSE SOME OF THE SMALLER FISH.
WE HAVE GAINED SO MUCH ALREADY.
OKAY, LUCK. I'VE ASKED FOR A LOT TODAY...
...BUT... HYPERSPACE?
PLEASE?


The Shadow University.
THIS WAS A DISASTER. STILL... THE RETURN OF THE ARTIFACTS IS APPRECIATED.
WE'VE ALWAYS HAD OUR EYE ON YOU, APHRA. THIS WILL BE REMEMBERED.
HEY, I'M GLAD TO MAKE THE GESTURE.
IT'S WHAT THE DEAN WOULD HAVE WANTED.


The Museum Of Bar'leth.
THE RETURN OF THESE VALUABLES...IS UNEXPECTED.
SHOCKING. ANY REWARD CAN ONLY BE SYMBOLIC OF THEIR VALUE. THEY ARE PRICELESS.
WELL, IT'S PRICELESS WITH A LOT OF ZEROES.
I CAN LIVE WITH THAT.


IT'S A SHAME SOME WERE LOST, OF COURSE.
IT IS.

IT'S A SHAME SOME COULDN'T BE FOUND, OF COURSE.
IT IS.


WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

RESEARCH.
SOME *SERIOUS* RESEARCH.

Zeltros.
YOUR DANTOOINE ICE-TWIST, MA'AM.
AND I BELIEVE THAT COMPLETES MY RESEARCH OF THE COCKTAIL MENU.
GOODBYE, KILLER DROIDS.
GOODBYE, MURDEROUS WOOKIEES.
GOODBYE, SITH LORDS.
HELLO, HAPPY ENDINGS.

The Outer Rim.
KRGGGGHHH!
YOU'RE... TRAINING GLADIATORS? BUT THAT'S WHAT WE DID TO YOU.
NO.
YOU'RE GOING TO TRAIN US, LIKE WE DID YOU...
GRRRHAAAH!
NO!

Son-Tuul.
WE APPEAR TO HAVE VISITORS, SIR.
YOU DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE GOING TO GET AWAY WITH ALL THE RAIDS. WHAT IS THE PRIDE THINKING? WE HAD AN UNDERSTANDING!
HELP ME.
WHAT ARE Y--
BLEEP!
YES, IT IS MUCH MORE EFFICIENT WHEN OUR COMPETITORS COME TO US RATHER THAN US HAVING TO HUNT THEM DOWN.
I DO BELIEVE THAT SECURES THE PRIDE'S HOLD IN THIS SECTOR, YONAK.
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT?
WELL DONE... MASTER.

Coruscant.
IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE RAID, MUCH OF THE UNDERWORLD IS DISRUPTED...
STRENGTH WE WOULD HAVE SPENT CONTROLLING MERE CRIMINALS CAN BE TURNED TOWARD THE REBELS...
ALL THIS GOOD NEWS AND A PRESENT? WE ARE BLESSED.
IT IS AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT.
IT BELIEVES ITSELF A JEDI.
HMM.
PUT IT WITH THE REST OF MY COLLECTION...
"I'M SURE WE'LL FIND SOME USE FOR IT."

APHRA?
YES, I'D LOVE TO HAVE ANOTHER COCKTAIL. MAKE IT A--
AT LAST!
YOU KILLED DUKAN FOR THAT DUMB ARTIFACT!
WE'VE HUNTED YOU ALL THE WAY FROM THE COSMANTIC STEPPES AND NOW YOU'RE GOING TO FACE A TRIAL FOR--
NO!

SHE KILLED TUKAN, TOO!
SHE GOT DUKAN AND TUKAN!
GET HER!
OH, NO.
WHY DOES THIS ALWAYS HAPPEN TO ME?

# DOCTOR'S NOTES

Ah, what a fine heroic narrative that was, of the uprising of two noble droids to take their place in underworld of the *Star Wars* galaxy.

BLEEEP!

No, I'm not entirely sure why they spent so much time on Aphra either, BeeTee. We're the stars in this *Star Wars*, surely? Where's our spin-off book? Oh well. Better answer some letters. I hope they distract me from this terrible ennui.

Hey Marvel,

I've been enjoying *Doctor Aphra* issues #1-11 and now I can't wait for issue #12, because Darth Vader will be back! I would like to have more old characters, like Luke or Han. My favorite character is Triple-Zero. I've made a Lego custom of Doctor Aphra. You can see it on the photo.

May the Force be with You!
Jacob

Oh, that is exactly I wanted to hear. Well done on your excellent taste, Jacob, and your impressive representation of Aphra. You can definitely live.

BLEEEP!

Well, he can definitely live...for *now*.

Hello,

Kieron Gillen is easily my favorite writer working in comics today. (Only Greg Pak comes close.) His two-year *Darth Vader* run was a tour de force from start to finish, and I'm thrilled that he's chosen to follow it by taking us on further adventures with everyone's favorite rogue archaeologist, along with the supporting cast that served her (and Kieron) so well in *Vader*.

I do have a question regarding BT-1. When we first meet him in *Darth Vader* #3 and even more so in later issues, his body and especially head seem to most resemble a specially outfitted or repurposed R5 or R6 astromech shell. But the BeeTee we see in *Doctor Aphra* today seems a bit different, slightly more fluid and not as angular in design. Did he undergo a refit somewhere along the way? Is this Special Edition BeeTee?

(Regardless, I still think he's a very sleek and capable droid who doesn't need to gruesomely murder me. He shouldn't send Triple-Zero to do it, either.)

Frank Dana

Good save at the end, Frank. You too can live.

BLEEEP!

Yes, for now. You are being a terrible pedant today. Anyway, in terms of BeeTee's design, Aphra was always a tinkerer, and we can assume she's used her terrible welding habit on BeeTee's bodywork along the way. And I like to think that every edition of BeeTee is a special one.

Dear Marvel;

While we at Mynock Manor have enjoyed Chelli Aphra's tales immensely since we first met, her Wednesday visits to the Manor have seemingly coincided with the disappearance of several priceless (or so we believed) artifacts from our halls. If you or anyone you know has any knowledge regarding the whereabouts of a few trinkets we and the mynocks of the Manor so desperately desire the return of, you'll be rewarded with more than you can imagine. Unless this is Aphra, then a return of the items will not result in blackmail over your questionable doctorate.

Kind Regards,
Head Butler Ryan Malin

Hmm. So you say several priceless artifacts have disappeared. How interesting. That suggests there are artifacts you have which have *not* disappeared, which could – for example – be looted from the burning husk of your mansion by a determined raiding party headed by two murderous droids. We'll pop around later to discuss the sorry disappearances from your collection.

BLEEEP!

Yes, BeeTee. And to kill him and take his stuff. Do try to read subtext.

I just gotta say I've been a huge fan of Doctor Aphra since she first came onboard in *Darth Vader* and was even more stoked that she was getting her own series. After reading issue #11 all I could say is "WHOA... it's about to get real." Super super stoked to see what else you all have in store for the galaxy's favorite rouge archeologist.

Sincerely,
Nathan Naich

Thank you, Nathan. Of course, what next for Aphra? Running from a series of disasters, mostly of her own making, I suspect. It's kind of her thing.

BLEEEEP!

Ah yes. Well, we'll find out next issue where that Gillen person is joined by Simon Spurrier in co-writing and Emilio Laiso takes over from Kev "AT-AT" Walker in art.

BLEEEEEP!

Yes, I do like that Spurrier person's name. Alliteration suits this galaxy far, far away. "Kieron Gillen" is distinctly lacking in charm. "Spurrier" could easily be a heroic figure, firing his blaster from his hip. "Gillen" sounds like some manner of desert-world shrub. I'm glad we're finally getting some class here. If you've got a few spare cycles, do write in any one of the over six million forms of communications I'm familiar with, to *StarWars@Marvel.com* and include "OKAY TO PRINT." Anyway – see you soon, and remember, don't do anything I wouldn't. So do literally anything, except show mercy.

Yours Murderingly,
Triple-Zero & BeeTee-One

DOCTOR APHRA
NEXT ISSUE:
A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away is a lot easier to get to than you think – and we want to hear from you! Write us at StarWars@Marvel.com if you want to make it onto a future letters page. Don't forget to mark the letter "OK TO PRINT."